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Three Generations of Italians: Interview with Ronald Amoroso by Maureen McGarry

Ronald Amoroso

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COVER SHEET FOR INTERVIEWS

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE Ronald Amoroso

INTERVIEWER Maureen McGarry

DATE OF INTERVIEW 2/25/79

SUBJECTS COVERED

Childhood, family

School, religion

Customs, traditions

Parental influences, future

Oral History Interview

with

Ronald Anthony Amoroso

February 25, 1979
Cranston, R.I.

by Maureen A. McGarry

Interviewer: For my final interview I am interviewing a third generation Italian. The first son. We are doing the interview at his home in Cranston. The first question I'd like to ask is where you were born, Ron?

Interviewee: On Federal Hill.

Interviewer: How long did you live there?

Interviewee: Eleven years.

Interviewer: So, you must have gone to school until about the sixth grade, there?

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little about school? I know it was a long time ago, but can you remember...was your...Did you have any Italian teachers?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Did they teach the language Italian?

Interviewee: No, just the basic stuff.

Interviewer: Were any of the kids, were most of the kids Italian?

Interviewee: Yeh, most of them.

Interviewer: Did any of them speak Italian?

Interviewee: Probably.

Interviewer: You don't remember?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Let's talk about your parents for a little while. Can you remember what your father did while he lived up on Federal Hill?

Interviewee: He was in jewelry.

Interviewer: Did your mother work?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: She was home with you? Raised you?! So So she was the disciplinarian, you would say?

Interviewee: Yeh. My father wasn't, ya know....

Interviewer: He wasn't home right? You were with your mother most of the time.

Interviewee: Yeh, right, most of the time.

Interviewer: What church did your family attend while you lived on Federal Hill?

Interviewee: Holy Ghost.

Interviewer: Is that mostly a church of just Italian people or was it...?

Interviewee: Yeh, I think so.

Interviewer: Did they have any big celebrations for the

holidays, or was it just family? If you wanted in the family, you could do that...?

Interviewee: Just family, I guess.

Interviewer: Did your family?

Interviewee: Not like my immediate family...But, ya know just like Christmas and Easter and stuff we'd go over my grandpa's house and ya know...

Interviewer: Everyone was together, is that...

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: You said that you went to your grandparents, Was there any reason why you went there instead of an aunt or an uncle's?

Interviewee: No, it was just one of the things you did.

Interviewer: What if you didn't have your grandparents, would you gather at someone else's?

Interviewee: Well, like the oldest one in the family.

Interviewer: Who did all the cooking?

Interviewee: My grandmother.

Interviewer: All of it?

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: Was there anything special that you had to eat for the different holidays? I know that fish is a big thing on Christmas Eve, did you have that?

Interviewee: Yeh. Spaghetti on holiday, macaroni...

Interviewer: Any special desserts?

Interviewee: Not that I can remember, ya know...

Interviewer: Can't remember?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: In your own house now, because I know you live in Cranston now, in your own family, do you celebrate the holidays like you did then?

Interviewee: Not like we did then but, ya know, we still celebrate them.

Interviewer: But, nothing big?

Interviewee: Not like the big spreads.

Interviewer: So Ron, how old were you when you moved?

Interviewee: Eleven..Twelve.

Interviewer: Where did you move to?

Interviewee: Cranston.

Interviewer: Was there a reason why you moved?

Interviewee: Yeh, they wanted to get us kids out of the city.

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee: I don't know. Guess they wanted to bring us up in a better environment.

Interviewer: Did you notice any differences in the church for instance? Was it still all Italian, the new church you went to?

Interviewee: Yeh, ya know, mostly.

Interviewer: What church was that?

Interviewee: St. Rocco's

Interviewer: Did they celebrate the same holidays?

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: Feasts and things like that?

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: Thats really good. Was there any difference in school? Any italian teachers now?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No, still no italians?!...When you got out of High School did your parents encourage you to go to college or to work?

Interviewee: No, they left it up to me.

Interviewer: And wht did you decide to do?

Interviewee: I went to work.

Interviewer: Where did you work?

Interviewee: A machine shop in Warwick.

Interviewer: One job?

Interviewee: No, I work in Sears too, a salesman, part time.

Interviewer: Oh...You had said before we started the tape that you were going to be getting married in June. Are you marrying an Italian?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Did your parents want you to marry an Italian?

Interviewee: No, they left that up to mee too.

Interviewer: Did your father marry an Italian?

Interviewee: No, my mother is French.

Interviewer: What did his grandfather think of that or dnn't you know? His father, I mean.

Interviewee: No. From what I heard, they didn't like it

too much, but they accepted it.

Interviewer: Does your grandfather know that your marrying a non-Italian?

Interviewee: No, he died.

Interviewer: How about...is your grandmother?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Ron, do you have any interest in going to Italy?

Interviewee: No, there's other places I'd rather go first.

Interviewer: Did your parents go to Italy? Or your father at least?

Interviewee: I think he was.

Interviewer: He was? So he must have told you a little about it.

Interviewee: Yeh.

Interviewer: Being a third generation Italian I think what you would be considered is a modern day Italian, what would be your views on roles of women in today's society?

Interviewee: If she wants to work she can but I'm not going to make her.

Interviewer: When you bring up your children, are you going to bring them up with the same Italian customs you celebrated or are you going to bring them up with more, like your grandparents celebrated?

Interviewee: Probably the same ones that I was brought up

with.

Interviewer: For my last question, would you consider yourself an Italian or an American?

Interviewee: American.

Interviewer: Any reason for that?

Interviewee: No, just the way things are now.

Interviewer: O.K. Thank you for your time, you've been very helpful.